DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 471 535 JC 030 048

TITLE	Engaging Community Colleges: A First Look. Community College Survey of Student Engagement 2002 Findings.
INSTITUTION	Texas Univ., Austin. Community Coll. Leadership Program.
SPONS AGENCY	Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia, PA.; Lumina Foundation for Education, Indianapolis, IN.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	17p.; Additional support also provided by the MetLife Foundation.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.ccsse.org/publications/ report.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Colleges; Educational Assessment; Educational Research; *School Surveys; *Student Attitudes; Student Needs; *Student Surveys; *Two Year College Students; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

This Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) report argues that educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward the right activities, and that a key factor for student learning is the quality of effort students devote to educationally purposeful activities. The statistics offered herein state that 15% of first-year community college students never reported participating in college sponsored activities, while 20% of second-year students reported the same. Full-time community college students reported spending more than 11 hours per week preparing for class, while only 11% of part-time students reported the same. About 49% of first-year college students never talked with a faculty member about readings outside of class, according to the paper. Thirty-six percent of first-year and 21% of second-year students never made a class presentation. This paper also explains the procedures CCSSE uses for conducting surveys at colleges that engage their services, including merging college-tailored letters, administering and scoring of surveys, and creating data files and reports. Includes a list of pilot study participants and a cost-of-services chart. (NB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

CCSSE
Community College Survey of Student Engagement

ED 471 535

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

I. Rouche

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Engaging Community Colleges

A First Look

IC030048

Community College Survey of Student Engagement

2002 Findings

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Acknowledgments

Without the 13 community colleges that volunteered to participate in *CCSSE*'s 2001 pilot, we could never have launched this major initiative so successfully. The 48 colleges that signed up for the spring 2002 national field test have helped us further improve the survey instrument and our sampling, administration, and reporting procedures. To these colleges — and especially to their presidents, *CCSSE* coordinators, survey administrators, and students — we are most grateful.

In this work, *CCSSE* has been the fortunate beneficiary of the expertise and experience of the staff of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and its director, Dr. George Kuh, who also chairs *CCSSE*'s Technical Advisory Panel. Dr. Peter Ewell, vice president at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, not only is one of the fine minds behind both NSSE and *CCSSE*, but also chairs *CCSSE*'s National Advisory Board. Deep appreciation is due also to Dr. Russell Edgerton, director of The Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning and an eminent leader in American higher education.

CCSSE is supported by generous grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Lumina Foundation for Education. Both philanthropies recognized the potential value of creating a national survey that would focus on learning-centered indicators of quality for community colleges. And both hope to see the results widely used to pursue institutional improvement and strengthen public accountability. The MetLife Foundation provides important additional support for *CCSSE*'s focus on student retention.

Finally, we thank these people at The University of Texas at Austin for their support of *CCSSE* and their commitment to community college education: Dr. John E. Roueche, Sid W. Richardson Regents Chair and director of the Community College Leadership Program; Dr. Jay Scribner, chair of the Department of Educational Administration; Dr. Michael P. Thomas, associate dean of the College of Education; and Dr. Manuel Justiz, dean of the College of Education.

We look forward to another year of working and learning with a growing cadre of community colleges that, through their focus on student learning, are choosing the most important kind of quality.

Kay McClenney
Director
Community College Survey of Student Engagement

Contents

Leaders in the Changing World of Higher Education 2

CCSSE: A Tool for Evaluation, Improvement, and Accountability 3

Key Challenges for Community Colleges and Their Students 5

Challenge #1: Success looks different for each student, making it more difficult for community colleges to assess their performance. 5

Challenge #2: "Capture time" — the time colleges have to engage students — is limited, so what colleges do to make the most of that time is critical. 6

Challenge #3: Economics are working against community colleges 7

The Experience of High-Risk Students 8

Student Satisfaction with Community Colleges 10

CCSSE National Advisory Board 12

CCSSE Technical Advisory Panel 12

Leaders in the Changing World of Higher Education

The world of higher education has changed. The responsibilities of today's colleges cannot be adequately understood or evaluated in the context of traditional colleges and universities, traditional images of college students, or traditional ways of "going to college."

Colleges, particularly community and technical colleges, are playing a new role in our society and economy, and the students they serve do not fit the profile of the "typical" 18- to 24-year-old, full-time college student who lives on campus. These challenges, moreover, are playing out at a time when the public and policymakers are intensely focused on quality in higher education — and during an economic downturn, which is having a dramatic effect on community colleges. When the economy declines, enrollment rises and funding shrinks, so money is tightest while demand is peaking.

College: Where Public Interest Meets Student Interest

Understanding the role higher education plays in our society and our economy is essential for identifying the challenges today's students and their colleges face, finding solutions to overcome them, and ultimately, gauging the success of our higher education systems.

Policymakers' and the public's expectations of colleges are growing for two basic reasons: economics and the growing demands of being a responsible citizen in today's world.

Economic health — both regional economic viability and national economic competitiveness — depends on increasing every individual's educational attainment. In the past, attending college was a sorting function. A college degree meant a higher income and all the resulting benefits, such as access to better health care and better educational opportunities for one's children. But lacking a college degree didn't necessarily shut people out of opportunity — or compromise regional economies. A generation ago, a worker with a high school diploma could successfully obtain and succeed in a lifelong job that supported a family and helped build local wealth.

Today, postsecondary education is becoming the minimum educational requirement for holding a job that supports at least a middle-class standard of living. Every job has greater demands — and requirements for existing jobs are changing, often faster than workers can keep up. Workers also are returning to college to train for new careers to respond to changing needs of the workplace and the variable national economy.

What Is a "Typical" College Student?

Understanding the "Typical" College Student

17%

Only one in six undergraduate students in the United States is an 18- to 24-year-old, living on campus and attending one school full time.

Source: Arthur Levine and Jeanette S. Cureton, "Collegiate Life: An Obituary." In *Change*, Vol. 30, Number 3, May/June 1998, p. 14.

The typical college student no longer is an 18- to 24-year-old, living on campus and attending one school full time. In fact, that description applies to only one in six undergraduate students in the United States.

Community college students, comprising almost half of U.S. undergraduates, typically are older, and they have more varied educational goals.[1] They also are more likely than the "traditional" student to attend college part time, commute to school, work, care for dependents, and be financially independent. This means that students have to work harder to achieve their academic goals, and colleges have to address significant challenges to retain and educate them.

Statistics from *National Profile of Community Colleges: Trends and Statistics, Third Edition (2000)* available from Community College Press.

In addition to these economic concerns, the demands of life and citizenship are growing more complex. Every person in this country now functions in a global environment, and participating in the democratic process requires higher levels of knowledge and skill, which often are best acquired through postsecondary education.

Colleges, particularly community and technical colleges, are filling the gaps, providing ongoing training for workers, preparing people for career changes, and giving a strong academic start to students who want to transfer to four-year colleges and earn bachelor's degrees. And community colleges are offering lifelong learning opportunities that prepare all students to be effective citizens.

For more information about CCSSE *and the 2002 survey, visit www.ccsse.org.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CCSSE: A Tool for Evaluation, Improvement, and Accountability

Community colleges have the complicated task of educating a diverse population of students with varying goals and competing demands on their time — while providing the broad access that ensures that *everyone* has an entry point to quality higher education.

Now more than ever, community colleges need tools that can help them better assess their students' needs and strengthen institutional efforts to promote retention and learning.

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement *(CCSSE)* is such a tool. Grounded in research, *CCSSE* provides a mechanism for assessing quality in community college education. It helps colleges focus on good educational practice (practice that promotes high levels of student learning and retention), identify areas in which they can improve programs and services for students, and respond to rising expectations for public accountability.

The Community College Student Report

This year marks the first annual release of the results of *CCSSE*'s survey, *The Community College Student Report*. The survey is administered directly to community college students at *CCSSE* member colleges in randomly selected classes.

Research shows that the more actively engaged students are — with college faculty and staff, with other students, with the subject matter — the more likely they are to learn and to achieve their academic goals. The survey items focus on institutional practices and student behaviors that are highly correlated with student learning and retention. Results are made public on *CCSSE*'s Web site (www.ccsse.org), where users can find detailed information about student engagement as well as findings for the full *CCSSE* population, various subgroups within the full population, and individual colleges.

CCSSE is committed to presenting data without flinching. Accurate information, whether positive or negative, can help improve educational practice and performance. We also support community college efforts to use survey data for continuous improvement, and we encourage policymakers to create conditions that support and reward institutional work to improve student learning.

Two important notes about these results.

★ While the pool of respondents is not yet large enough to qualify as a representative sample of U.S. community colleges, the data from *CCSSE*'s 2002 national field test provide a starting point for discussion and for continuing work on improving teaching, learning, student retention, and student success at community colleges.

★ *CCSSE* opposes using its data to rank colleges. Each community college's performance should be considered in terms of its mission, institutional focus, and student characteristics. Because of differences in these areas — and variations in college resources — comparing survey results between individual institutions serves little constructive purpose and likely will be misleading.

2002 Survey Respondents

In spring 2002, approximately 33,500 students responded to the *CCSSE* survey, which is administered during class sessions at *CCSSE* member colleges. Details about these participating colleges are below.

- ★ 48 colleges in 22 states participated in the 2002 survey.
- ★ Of the 48 participating colleges, 16 are classified as small (fewer than 3,000 students), 17 as medium (3,000–7,999 students), and 15 as large (8,000 or more students).
- ★ In terms of location, there are 16 urban, 16 suburban, and 16 rural colleges.
- ★ Students who responded to the survey generally reflect the underlying student population of the participating colleges in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity. However, part-time students were underrepresented in the *CCSSE* sample.

Part-Time Students Are Underrepresented in *CCSSE*'s Sample

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of students enrolled in *CCSSE*-participating colleges are part-time students (IPEDS, 2000), but only 35% of students who completed the survey attend college part time. Because of this underrepresentation, the findings cited here may understate the magnitude of the difference between full-time and part-time students. This difference is important because colleges must address significant challenges to help part-time students achieve their academic goals (see page 6).

The underrepresentation of part-time students is due to an artifact of the sampling procedure. Surveys were administered in randomly selected classes with equal distribution among morning, afternoon, and evening classes. Because part-time students take fewer classes, they are statistically less likely to be in a class randomly selected for the survey. In addition, part-time students disproportionately attend evening classes, leading to further underrepresentation.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

For more information about CCSSE *and the 2002 survey, visit www.ccsse.org.*

Key Challenges for Community Colleges and Their Students

The demographics and life situations of 2002 *CCSSE* respondents (the approximately 33,500 students who responded to *CCSSE*'s 2002 survey) redefine "typical" for today's college student. Understanding who is attending college is the first step toward identifying the challenges students and their colleges face — and finding solutions so students can reach their educational goals.

Challenge #1: Success looks different for each student, making it more difficult for community colleges to assess their performance.

Students report a wide variety of primary goals, and often, they cite more than one. In addition, students attend multiple institutions and return to college at recurring points across their careers and lifetimes. These varying student goals and entry points create significant challenges for establishing campus environments that serve all community college students effectively — and for gauging community college performance.

Initial Findings

★ **Students' educational goals vary.** More than half of community and technical college students surveyed (58%) plan to transfer to a four-year college or university, but nearly as many (54%) state that obtaining job-related skills is their primary goal. In fact, one-quarter of students report that transfer is not a goal, and nearly 10% indicate that their primary educational goal is not an academic credential.

★ **Students, on average, are getting older,** a reflection of the need for ongoing employment training and lifelong learning. The age range for survey respondents is 18 to 82. The average age is 26.

★ **Many students no longer attend just one college.** Among survey respondents, almost a third started college at another institution; 12% already have earned a postsecondary degree. About 11% are taking classes concurrently at another institution (high school, another community or technical college, vocational school, or a four-year college or university — either onsite or through a distance-learning program). About 10% of part-time and 5% of full-time students are taking two or more classes at another institution while enrolled in the community college where they took the survey.

What These Results Mean for Colleges

Having an academic plan with clear goals is predictive of retention, particularly for high-risk students. With students filling their academic baskets from a variety of institutions, often simultaneously and usually over several years, they risk losing sight of their academic goals. Knowing each student's individual goals and providing strong academic advising become critical so students can develop and maintain cohesive academic plans — and achieve their academic goals.

Meeting the Challenge

Many community colleges focus on academic planning to better identify each student's goal and help him or her achieve it. Valencia Community College (FL), for example, has earned national recognition for its *LifeMap* model for academic planning. As the college reminds its students, "Life is a journey. You'll need a map."

CCSSE *2002 Results: Students' Primary Goals*

Completing a certificate program	32%	
Obtaining an associate degree	58%	(for 22% this is not a goal)
Transferring to a four-year college/university	58%	(for 25% this is not a goal)
Obtaining job-related skills	54%	
Updating job skills	28%	(for 48% this is not a goal)
Changing careers	23%	
Taking one or two courses for self-improvement	22%	
Obtaining knowledge in a specific area	59%	

Challenge #2: "Capture time" — the time colleges have to engage students — is limited, so what colleges do to make the most of that time is critical.

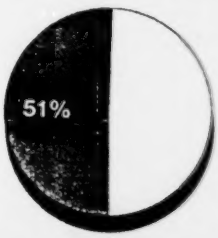
Students have multiple demands on their time and spend limited time on campus. Survey results indicate that most student-faculty interaction takes place in class; students report limited out-of-classroom interaction, and more than 80% of students do not participate in college-sponsored extracurricular activities. **Therefore, the most powerful engagement strategies likely will center around the classroom and classwork.**

Students' Time on Campus Is Limited

Part-Time Enrollment in CCSSE Member Colleges

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of students in *CCSSE* colleges are enrolled in college part time. (Source: IPEDS, 2000)

Most Students Work



More than half of surveyed students work more than 20 hours per week.

Many Students Care for Dependents

29% of surveyed students spend 11 hours or more per week caring for dependents.

Most Students Commute

In fact, 23% of surveyed students spend six to 20 hours per week commuting to and from class.

Initial Findings

★ **Most students attend college part time.** Nearly two-thirds (64%) of students in *CCSSE* colleges are enrolled part time (IPEDS, 2000). (Because of sampling processes, however, only 35% of students who completed the survey attend college part time. See page 4 for details.)

★ **Most students work.** Nearly a third (32%) of students surveyed work more than 30 hours per week, while more than half (51%) work more than 20 hours per week. Part-time students are more likely to work longer hours, but significant numbers of full-time students spend a lot of time at work (23% work more than 30 hours per week; 45% work more than 20 hours per week).

★ **Many students care for dependents.** More than one-fifth (21%) of respondents have children living at home — 29% spend 11 hours or more per week caring for dependents. More than 17% spend more than 30 hours per week caring for dependents.

★ **Most students (93%) commute,** and close to one-quarter (23%) of surveyed students spend six to 20 hours per week commuting to and from class.

What These Results Mean for Colleges

The challenges for engaging part-time students, many of whom have competing priorities, obviously are significant. Preliminary findings on a group of survey items related to active learning and student-faculty interaction suggest that part-time students are less engaged, particularly in working with faculty and other students outside the classroom. For example:

★ 15% of part-time students (and only 7% of full-time students) never worked with other students on projects during class.

★ 45% of part-time students (compared to 29% of full-time students) never worked with classmates outside of class to prepare assignments.

★ 51% of part-time students (39% of full-time students) never discussed ideas from readings or classes with an instructor outside of class.

Research indicates that these types of interaction lead to improved learning and higher retention rates, and *CCSSE* findings may help colleges find avenues for strengthening these key educational practices. For

For more information about CCSSE and the 2002 survey, visit www.ccsse.org.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

example, literature suggests that frequent feedback from faculty members contributes to higher retention rates, and the *CCSSE* survey results indicate that colleges may be able to make better use of technology to promote that activity. Almost 80% of students indicated that they have access at home to a computer with an Internet connection where they can do schoolwork. More than 20% have such access at work, and 70% have on-campus access. Yet only 65% of students surveyed report that they use the Internet at least weekly for class projects or assignments, only 47% report making such use of the Internet several times a week or daily, and only 30% often or very often communicate with an instructor via e-mail.

Meeting the Challenge

Some community colleges already are finding ways to make use of technology. Cascadia Community College (WA), for example, is thoroughly integrating technology into its academic programs and taking steps to promote electronic communication among students and faculty.

Challenge #3: Economics are working against community colleges.

A number of recent research reports have made the case that Americans' opportunity to participate in college is tied too closely to their income level — and that the country cannot afford to let this condition continue.[1] *CCSSE* findings confirm the challenge.

Initial Findings

★ **Many students are financially independent,** meaning they rely on their own income and savings as a major source for college costs. Paying for college is a "significant issue" for 40% of surveyed students, and many do not have financial support from others. More than half (56%) indicate that they do not receive support from parents; 55% report that they do not receive grants or scholarships; and three-quarters (75%) do not have student loans, although 18% rely on loans as a major source of financial support.

★ **The economic downturn increases the burden.** Two things happen when the economy has a downturn: (1) enrollment at community colleges increases as laid-off and anxious workers try to improve skills or change careers, and (2) community college budgets are cut in response to tighter state budgets. Community colleges — which consistently resist raising tuition, especially when access is most important — face difficult decisions.

Many Students Are Financially Independent

40% of surveyed students report that paying for college is a "significant issue."

More than half of surveyed students indicate that they do not receive support from parents; a comparable number report that they do not receive grants or scholarships.

What These Results Mean for Colleges

The current economy is taking its toll on community colleges, and survey responses indicate that students need more help managing the financial burden of attending college. Only 45% of students surveyed report that their colleges provide the financial support they need to afford their education. Furthermore, the survey results may understate the financial challenges because part-time students are underrepresented in the sample, and financial aid for part-time students in many locations is limited or even unavailable. And of course, the survey results do not address the numbers of potential students who are not in college at all because of financial barriers.

Meeting the Challenge

In times of severe fiscal constraints, colleges are pressed to make decisions about where to target resources to obtain the most positive impact on student learning and retention. While resisting pressure to increase tuition, community colleges increasingly are focusing on students' earliest experiences in the institution — supporting strategies that strengthen chances for success in the critical first year of college. For example, Moraine Valley Community College (IL) has documented significant success with its new approach to student orientation, and Montgomery College (TX) is expanding its successful learning communities to include additional courses, particularly those serving developmental education students.

[1] See Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, *Empty Promises* (2002), and National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, *Losing Ground* (2002), for more information.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Experience of High-Risk Students

Research indicates that there are several factors that put undergraduate students at risk of not attaining their educational goals. Community college students generally are three to four times more likely to reflect those factors than are their counterparts in four-year colleges and universities.[3] The following risk factors are reflected in the *CCSSE* survey:

- being academically underprepared (i.e., students who have not earned a high school diploma and/or have participated or plan to participate in developmental/remedial education);
- being a single parent;
- being financially independent (i.e., students who rely on their own income or savings as a major source for college costs and indicate that parents and spouses/significant others are not sources of income for that purpose);
- caring for children at home;
- working more than 30 hours per week;
- being a first-generation college student;
- being a part-time student; and
- identifying the cost of attending college as a significant issue.

CCSSE wants to understand how "at-risk" students are faring in community and technical colleges and how these institutions might effectively target continuing efforts to serve them well.

As part of the data analysis for the 2002 survey, *CCSSE* analyzed student responses on the risk factors and created three groups of student survey respondents: low-risk students, who exhibit zero or one of the risk factors; moderate-risk students, who exhibit two to four risk factors; and high-risk students, who exhibit five or more risk factors. Only a quarter (25%) of *CCSSE* respondents fell into the low-risk category. Nearly two-thirds (66%) were moderate-risk students; 9% were high-risk students.

Preliminary Findings for High-Risk Students

1. Educational goals. High-risk students are less likely to set transferring to a four-year institution as a primary goal — 54% of high-risk students versus 64% of low-risk students have that goal. The figures are reversed for the goal of completing an associate degree.

2. Effort. High-risk students appear to be exerting more effort to succeed. This finding is not surprising because they are overcoming significant challenges to attend college.

[3] Educational Testing Service, *The American Community College Turns 100*, 2000.

For more information about CCSSE *and the 2002 survey, visit www.ccsse.org.*

High-risk students are:

- ★ much less likely to come to class unprepared (26% say they never come unprepared as opposed to 15% of low-risk students);
- ★ more likely to ask questions and participate in class discussions;
- ★ more likely to prepare two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in;
- ★ more likely to report that they "work harder than they thought they could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations";
- ★ more likely to find their exams challenging (39% find their exams extremely or quite challenging compared to 27% of the low-risk group); and
- ★ more dedicated to studying. Despite the number of hours they work for pay off campus (79% of the high-risk group work more than 30 hours per week compared to 6% of the low-risk group), students in the high-risk group devote as much time to preparing for class as their lower-risk classmates do.

High-risk students also are taking advantage of services offered by their colleges. They are more likely to give high ratings to the importance of tutoring, skill labs, financial aid advising, and career counseling. Moreover, the more risk factors students face, the more likely they are to participate in study-skills classes, college orientation and success courses, and organized learning communities.

From these preliminary findings, community and technical colleges that participated in *CCSSE* 2002 appear to be doing a good job of motivating and serving high-risk students. They are offering services designed to address issues related to risk, and students are using and benefiting from these services. Still, ensuring the success of these students remains one of the critical challenges for community colleges and one of their most significant potential contributions to their communities and states.

Meeting the Challenge

Many community colleges are focusing on high-risk students. Community College of Denver (CO), for example, is recognized nationally for its programs for academically underprepared students. The college demonstrates exemplary performance on a cluster of survey items related to support for learners. An "intensive care" environment, featuring both human interaction and technological support, appears to be one of its keys to student success.

One Notable Area for Improvement

High-risk students are less likely to report that their college "provides the financial support necessary for them to afford their education." Only 37% of high-risk students indicate they receive sufficient financial support from their colleges versus 48% of low-risk students.

Student Satisfaction with Community Colleges

Highlights of results in the area of overall satisfaction with the community college are below. For more in-depth results in key areas of student engagement, see *CCSSE*'s Web site (www.ccsse.org).

- ★ 71% of students indicate that their college provides the support they need to succeed at the college either "quite a bit" or "very much."
- ★ A smaller percentage (45%) report that the college provides the financial support they need to afford their education.
- ★ 25% report that the college helps them cope with nonacademic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) either quite a bit or very much, although 39% say that "very little" help is provided on that front.
- ★ 94% of students surveyed indicate that they would recommend their college to a friend or family member.
- ★ 86% evaluate their entire educational experience at the college as good or excellent.

The Bottom Line

These preliminary findings highlight the challenges of providing a high-quality education for a largely commuter student population with a high percentage of older, part-time, working students as well as significant numbers of students who bring with them challenges that they and their colleges must address together. The challenges are real.

One might — and perhaps should — ask whether the results shown here are good enough. Or one might conclude that community and technical colleges, given their resources and current demands, are providing important opportunities for a diverse population with widely varying needs. There is an array of potential conclusions, which indicate that the survey results can serve their intended purposes: inspiring dialogue, engaging participants, and improving practice. And whatever the conclusions, by participating in this survey, the 2001-02 *CCSSE* colleges are leading the way with an effort to examine their educational practice and take action to improve it where needed.

For more information about CCSSE *and the 2002 survey, visit www.ccsse.org.*

Coming in 2003

Public Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

CCSSE's first year of work with community colleges included a fall 2001 pilot of the survey and a spring 2002 field test. *CCSSE*'s findings from this year's survey data are preliminary—providing a first look at student engagement in community and technical colleges. As the number of participating colleges increases and *CCSSE*'s national database grows, we will have a solid basis for drawing firm conclusions about community college performance.

Beginning in fall 2003, *CCSSE* will report survey results in terms of five *national benchmarks of effective educational practice*. The benchmarks will address these key engagement areas: active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners. We will use the national benchmarks to:

- ★ **establish a baseline level of student engagement.** In addition to providing survey results for individual items, we will group survey responses that correspond with each key area of engagement and calculate a *national benchmark* for the population of *CCSSE* member colleges. We also will calculate *benchmark scores* for each college so individual schools can see how well they are performing relative to the full *CCSSE* population and to similar institutions, determine where they might focus improvement efforts, and track their progress over time.
- ★ **stimulate conversations about effective educational practice.** *CCSSE* results are public, so faculty members, administrators, students, parents, accreditors, policymakers, and others will have access to the benchmarks for both the full *CCSSE* population and individual colleges. Colleges can use the results in discussions about sharing best practices, applying successful strategies from one college to another, and understanding why some areas need improvement. Policymakers and the public will have new information that helps them better understand the work of community colleges, the challenges they face, and the kinds of support they need to achieve and sustain educational excellence.
- ★ **design improvement strategies and promote actions that strengthen learning and retention.** Benchmarks are baselines for improvement — reference points that can and should be moved by intentional action by colleges and other stakeholders.

Support for Institutional Change and Improvement Strategies

The *CCSSE* Web site, www.ccsse.org, is a primary vehicle for providing survey results and putting them in context. The site provides in-depth information about student engagement and invites visitors to view survey results according to criteria they select. Results are presented in drill-down charts that provide information in easy-to-manage steps. Users first see a graph that provides general results; then, they can click on various parts of the graph to get the details behind the numbers. The site also provides information about *CCSSE*, the survey, and its administration as well as special features for member colleges, including a more comprehensive search-the-data section and tools to help them communicate results to various audiences.

CCSSE National Advisory Board

Peter Ewell, Chair
Vice President
National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

David Armstrong
Chancellor
Florida Community Colleges

George Boggs
President and CEO
American Association of Community Colleges

Russell Edgerton
Director
The Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning

Joni E. Finney
Vice President
National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education

George Grainger
Grant Officer
Houston Endowment, Inc.

Zelema Harris
President
Parkland College (IL)

James Hudgins
Executive Director
The South Carolina Board of Technical and Comprehensive Education

Christine Johnson
President
Community College of Denver (CO)

George Kuh
Chancellor's Professor and Director
National Survey of Student Engagement
Indiana University

Byron N. McClenney
President
Kingsborough Community College (NY)

Alexander McCormick
Senior Scholar
The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Mark Milliron
President and CEO
League for Innovation in the Community College

Steve Mittelstet
President
Richland College (TX)

Michael Nettles
Professor of Education
University of Michigan

Margot Perez-Greene
Director, NISOD
The University of Texas at Austin

Victoria Munoz Richart
President
Cascadia Community College (WA)

John E. Roueche
Sid W. Richardson Regents Chair and Director
Community College Leadership Program
The University of Texas

Jerry Sue Thornton
President
Cuyahoga Community College (OH)

Vincent Tinto
Distinguished Professor, Department of Higher Education
Syracuse University

CCSSE Technical Advisory Panel

George Kuh, Chair
Chancellor's Professor and Director
National Survey of Student Engagement
Indiana University

Peter Ewell
Vice President
National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

Gary Hanson
Professor
Arizona State University

John Kennedy
Director
Center for Survey Research
Indiana University

Virginia McMillan
Executive Vice President
Illinois Community College Board

Bill Moore
Outcomes Assessment Manager
Washington State Board for Community College Education

Patricia Murrell
Director
Community College Student Experience Questionnaire
University of Memphis

Kent Phillippe
Senior Research Associate
American Association of Community Colleges

Gary R. Pike
Vice Chancellor, Student Life Studies
Adjunct Professor
University of Missouri-Columbia

CCSSE is supported by grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Lumina Foundation for Education, and the MetLife Foundation. Co-sponsors are The Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning and The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

For more information about CCSSE and the 2002 survey, visit www.ccsse.org.

CCSSE Staff

Kay M. McClenney
Director, *CCSSE*
Adjunct Professor, Community College Leadership Program

Judith A. Ouimet
Associate Director and Project Manager, *CCSSE*

Evelyn N. Waiwaiole
Project Manager, *MetLife Foundation Initiative on Student Success*

Alicia Betsinger
Senior Research Associate

C. Nathan Marti
Senior Research Associate

Jeff Crumpley
Research Associate

Judy Row
Survey Operations Coordinator

Kathy A. Thatcher
Administrative Associate

Rowland Cadena
Project Associate

Joe Carrizales
Student Assistant

Gloria Ortega
Student Assistant

CCSSE Member Colleges

For a list of *CCSSE* member colleges, visit www.ccsse.org.

Editorial and design: KSA-Plus Communications, Inc.

Community College Survey of Student Engagement
Community College Leadership Program
The University of Texas at Austin
1 University Station, D5600
Austin, Texas 78712-0378
(512) 471-6807
Fax: (512) 471-4209
e-mail: info@ccsse.org
www.ccsse.org

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").